



March 10, 2026

The Honorable Sandy Bartlett  
Chairwoman, House Judiciary Committee  
Taylor House Office Building, Room 100  
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: STRONG OPPOSITION to House Bill 1386  
(HB1386 - Criminal Law - Distribution of Heroin or Fentanyl Causing Death or Serious Bodily Injury (Victoria, Scottie, Ashleigh, and Yader's Law) - UNFAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

The BRIDGES Coalition for Overdose Prevention Sites strongly opposes **HB1386**, a bill that seeks to address Maryland's overdose crisis with harsh new criminal penalties. We must focus on effective solutions. Founded in March 2017, BRIDGES Coalition for Overdose Prevention Centers (OPC) is a statewide Baltimore-based advocacy coalition working to end overdose and criminalization by promoting safe spaces, dignity, health, and justice for people who use drugs.

The approach of increasing prison sentences for drug-related issues has been tried repeatedly and has consistently failed to save lives. HB1386 creates severe penalties for individuals found liable for distributing heroin or fentanyl if a serious injury or death occurs. We urge the General Assembly to move away from punitive measures and toward proven, evidence-based solutions that prevent overdoses, such as accessible substance use treatment and harm reduction.

Though well-intended, HB1386 will have the unintended consequence of making a fatal overdose **more likely** for Maryland families. Laws like this contribute to mass incarceration and increase state prison costs, diverting resources from real public health solutions.

Crucially, drug induced homicide or DIH laws like HB1386 discourage people from reporting a potentially reversible overdose due to the fear of prosecution. This bill is particularly concerning because it includes **no Good Samaritan protections** for individuals who might be liable, even if they call for help in good faith. Fear of harsh penalties will lead people who use drugs to hesitate in reaching out for help in a life-or-death moment. This could tragically worsen Maryland's overdose crisis, undermining the progress we are finally starting to see.

**We ask that the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee give HB1386 an UNFAVORABLE report.**

For more information about the BRIDGES Coalition for Overdose Prevention Centers, please contact Cola Anderson at [cola@baltimoreharmreduction.org](mailto:cola@baltimoreharmreduction.org).